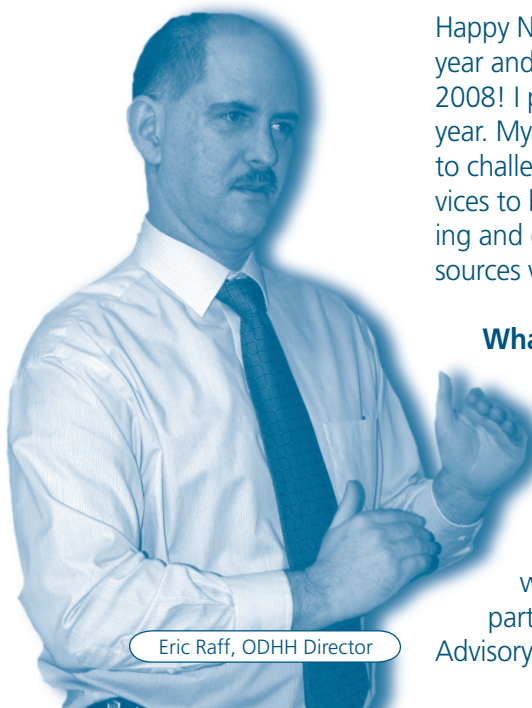


# Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Community Review WINTER 2008  
Volume 5, Number 1  
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



## Message from the Director



Eric Raff, ODHH Director

Happy New Year! 2007 has been a good year and I am already looking forward to 2008! I predict it will continue to be a busy year. My New Year's resolution is to continue to challenge ourselves to improve ODHH services to better serve the deaf, hard-of-hearing and deafblind people with the limited resources we have.

### What's Happening in 2008:

We will accomplish some of the goals identified in the 2007-2011 strategic plan and identify and establish new goals for the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan. ODHH will have more collaboration with our partners such as community members, Advisory Committee members, organiza-

tions, etc., so we can establish and complete new goals and strategies. A draft strategic plan for 2009-2013 is expected to be available for public comments this Spring. The new plan will be finalized by the end of this summer.

We will implement the ODHH Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) reporting activity. GMAP is about reporting ODHH performance measures and outcomes and demonstrating how we are doing on the goals identified in the strategic plan.

We will get ready to introduce wireless legislation in 2009. The wireless legislation is designed to ensure taxation is fair to both landline and cellular telephone subscribers because both kinds of subscribers use the relay services! Right now, wireless subscribers

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## Save the Dates!

ODHH Advisory Committee meetings  
will be held on Saturdays, 9 am - 4 pm on:

**March 29** in SeaTac

**June 14** in Bellingham

**Sept. 20** in Yakima

**Nov. 15** in Olympia

*Please look for future Advisory Committee meeting  
announcements on ODHH website and various  
email distributions.*

**Office of the Governor**

Christine Gregoire

**DSHS Secretary**

Robin Arnold-Williams

**DSHS Deputy Secretary**

Blake Chard

**ODHH****Eric Raff**, Director**Robert Lichtenberg**, Assistant Director**Ryan Bondroff**, IRA Program Manager**Brian Clark**, IT Network Specialist**Lucas Doelman**, Office Assistant**Emily Hill**, SLIM Program Manager**Lien Ngo-Tran**, Fiscal Officer**Rena Patch**, Executive Assistant**Steve Peck**, TRS Program Manager**Kelly Robison**, TED Program Manager**Claudia Foy**, SHS Program Manager**Colleen Rozmaryn**, ACT Program Manager**Ausha V. Potts**, Program Support**Jennifer Chowning**, Program Support**Jeannie Kay**, Customer Service

Representative

**William Crites**, IT Manager**Trevor Kosa**, IT Database Specialist**Advisory Committee****Bryan Branson**, Spokane

Blbranson1@msn.com

**George Cooper**, College Place

Sargeo@bmi.net

**William C. Danielson Jr.**, Selah

williamdanielson03@sprintpcs.com

**Mary Steinmeyer**, Fife

N22Mary@comcast.net

**Susan Tarbert**, Spokane

Sktsusan46@aol.com

**Robert Roberts**, Veradale

2bob61@gmail.com

**Gary Stafford**, Spokane

g-d-stafford@hotmail.com

**Ex-officio****Lona Jennings**, HLA of WA

lonaj@hearingloss-wa.org

**Jeremy Sasser**, WSDBC

jlsasser@earthlink.net

**Kathleen Morris**, WSRID

kbuckmo@aol.com

**Char Parsely**, WSAD

cpar123100@aol.com

**David Hankinson**, DVR

hankid@dshs.wa.gov

# ASL Modeling for Young Children by Washington's Deaf Adults:

## WE NEED YOU!

Co-Sponsored by WSDS and WSD

### What is this project?

This is a project where Deaf adults go into a classroom with deaf or hard of hearing students and visit. During the visit, the students will be asked to sign a story of something that happened to them. The Deaf adult tutor will then re-sign the student's story using appropriate ASL. The student will learn story telling skills from the Deaf adult. The purpose of this activity is to model American Sign Language with each student in order to improve expressive and receptive ASL skills.

### Why are Deaf adults being asked to participate?

For rural deaf and hard of hearing students, there are often very few opportunities to interact with signing Deaf adults. Also, limited access to peers impacts students' signing ability.

### Who should be involved?

Deaf adults who enjoy spending a few minutes each week with deaf children are encouraged to be involved.

### What are the qualifications?

Each Deaf adult must pass a background check, conducted by Nancy Graham at Washington Sensory Disabilities Services. She may be reached at [grahamn@cwu.edu](mailto:grahamn@cwu.edu).

Each Deaf adult must be fluent in American Sign Language.

Each Deaf adult must attend a short (15 - 20 minute) training session focused on the expectations of the tutoring time, as well as the do's and don'ts of the tutoring time.



### When will it start?

As soon as you submit your name to Nancy Graham for a background check and it is cleared, Carol Carrothers or Heather Abraham will contact you through VP or email regarding the short training. Once the training has been completed, you will be paired up with a teacher and a deaf student(s) in your area.

### Is this a paid or volunteer project?

This is currently a volunteer project but we are looking into writing grants and hope to be able to pay people for their time in the future.

### More questions?

Contact Carol Carrothers at [carolc@cwu.edu](mailto:carolc@cwu.edu) or 509-963-1131 or IP 198.104.102.66, or Heather Abraham at [heather.abraham@wsd.wa.gov](mailto:heather.abraham@wsd.wa.gov), 360-418-4292 or IP 169.204.199.211 Thank you!



# ODHH Earns Washington State Agency Outstanding Employer Award

By Deborah Schow, DSHS Communications

The DSHS Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is being honored as the Washington State Agency Outstanding Employer of 2007 by Morningside, a not-for-profit community rehabilitation organization for people with disabilities.

The annual Morningside awards recognize state and private workplaces in Washington that exemplify employment practices of hiring and retaining staff that have disabilities. Morningside serves clients at locations in seven western Washington counties – Thurston, Lewis, Mason, Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, and Pacific.

The ability to creatively accommodate staff with needed site modifications, training, and an ethos of flexibility, diversity, empowerment and encouragement of all employees were factors in the selection of the ODHH for the Outstanding Employer Award.

## The Right Support

In the nomination process, the hiring and continued career accomplishments of ODHH Office Assistant Lucas Doleman was cited as a model example of how with the right support a person with disabilities can achieve career goals and become an invaluable team member.

Lucas continues to excel with the support of supervisor Kelly Robison. Kelly is credited with being Lucas's "number one advocate." The nomination

explains how she modified job tasks to aid Lucas's independence and finds opportunities for him to demonstrate leadership skills and gain additional job responsibilities.

*Continued on page 9*



Photo Caption from left to right: Jim Larson, Morningside CEO, Kelly Robison, ODHH Program Coordinator, Lucas Doelman, ODHH Office Assistant, Eric Raff, Director of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Laurie Schindler, Morningside Job Coach are all smiles upon receiving the Outstanding State Employer Award for 2007.

## ODHH Introduces Trevor Kosa



Hello, my name is Trevor Kosa. I am the new Information Technology Specialist 3 with the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). I started in January 2008. In my position I will be consulting, performing design and supporting an agency-wide database to meet end-users and Governor Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) requirements for all ODHH programs.

I have experience as an application developer for over 9 years in Redmond, WA, Sioux Falls, SD, and Stockton, CA. I graduated with a B.S. degree in Electronics Engineering Technology from the ITT Technical Institute.

I love spending time with my wife and 2 kids because they bring happiness, laughter and love in my life. The full time job as a happy full time father leaves me with little enough time to train for US Deaf Cycling Team tryouts in summer of 2008. The US Deaf Cycling Team will be going to the 2009 Summer Deaflympics in Taipei, Taiwan. I have won 3 gold medals, 1 silver medal, and 1 bronze medal from 1993, 2001, and 2005 Deaflympics.

# Relay Users:

## Experiencing problems with Washington Relay Services?

### We'd like to hear from you!

Users of TTY, VCO, STS, CapTel, or other relay services can file complaints or submit comments and suggestions to improve services.

Users who experience problems with relay services, such as garbled messages, inappropriate processing of a call, billing errors, or other issues can file a complaint with ODHH or Sprint Relay Customer Service.

To appropriately process the complaint, users are highly encouraged to provide the relay operator's ID number, and a description of the problem. This will ensure that all complaints are filed and handled in a timely manner. The complaint will be forwarded to the Washington Relay Account Manager, who will then investigate the complaint. The account manager may contact the user for further information, if needed. Once the complaint has been resolved, he/she will contact the customer to ensure that they are satisfied with the resolution.

### Two ways to file a complaint with Washington Relay Services:

# 1

Contact the Sprint Relay Customer Service Department.

- Dial 7-1-1 and ask the relay operator to transfer you to the customer service department.
- Call customer service directly at (800) 676-3777 Voice/TTY.

# 2

Contact the ODHH Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS) Program Manager.

- Call ODHH at (800) 422-7930 Voice/TTY or (360) 902-8000 Voice/TTY/VP.
- E-Mail ODHH at [odhh@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:odhh@dshs.wa.gov).
- Contact Steve Peck, TRS Program Manager, directly at (360) 586-8912 TTY.

### Message from Director

*Continued from front page*

are not taxed for relay services. The wireless taxation legislation will also address ODHH concerns that revenue will decline as people switch to wireless devices and future funding needs to be available to keep current services and to be able to pay for future federally mandated Internet-based relay services.

We will begin to implement changes that will improve the ODHH information technology (IT) infrastructure. The new three-staff IT team is currently in the process of developing an IT strategic plan and budget that will prioritize and fund IT projects needed so staff can work more effectively and improve ODHH performance. The team will improve ODHH's website, database, network and security needs. Most importantly, this team will centralize our data reporting needed for GMAP. Hopefully, this will also pave the way for increased visibility of ODHH and improved ODHH service delivery.

We recently had an exciting, long-awaited showing of the new Deaf-Blind Communicator (DBC), a telecommunication device for the deaf-blind! Thanks to the Lighthouse for the Blind's Deaf-Blind Program, this event was where Deaf-Blind members of the DBC focus group showed this prototype to their peers. A prototype model of the DBC will be available for testing by HumanWare and then ODHH will be able to purchase a final product. We're looking forward to begin distributing this new product to deafblind individuals this summer. This device will open opportunities for deaf-blind people to have equal access to telecommunication services on the same level as hearing, deaf, and hard-of-hearing people.

Are you excited yet?! On behalf of ODHH, I would like to extend best wishes and may 2008 bring you excitement and a healthy and successful year!

# Get Connected!

## With Washington Relay

Get—and stay—connected to family, friends and co-workers. It has never been easier with Washington Relay.

Washington Relay is a free service provided by Washington State Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) to ensure equal communication access to the telephone service for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and speech disabled.

To use Washington Relay, simply dial 711 to connect with an operator. The operator will dial the requested number and relay the conversation between the two callers.

You'll never feel disconnected again!



VOICE	1.800.833.6384
TTY	1.800.833.6388
VCO	1.800.833.6386
STS	1.877.833.6341
HCO	1.800.833.6388
TB	1.800.833.6385

CUSTOMER SERVICE (ENGLISH)  
1.800.676.3777

CUSTOMER SERVICE (SPANISH)  
1.800.676.4290

[www.washingtonrelay.com](http://www.washingtonrelay.com)





# Update from DVR

By Lynnae Rutledge, Director

Greetings and Happy New Year! As the Director of the Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), I appreciate this opportunity to provide an update on our services. We have much good news to share.

First, it's important to know where we've been. Because of a shortage of resources, starting in 2001 DVR was required to establish an 'order of selection' and this limited who could receive DVR services. With 'order of selection,' many of our deaf and hard of hearing customers had to wait long periods of time for services. We apologize to all of you that experienced these delays. We realize that people with disabilities come to DVR when they need our services and because they want to go to



*"We have staff and partners throughout the state with the skills and interest in serving you and helping you achieve your vocational goals"*

— Lynnae Rutledge

work. Having to wait for services, while required by our federal law, was necessary but didn't offer the kind of customer service we know you should be able to expect from our program.

All through calendar year 2007, DVR staff across the state focused on reducing the waiting list. We were able to release 1,000 names each month. As a result, we now have many DVR customers actively involved in assessment, exploring their interests and starting their employment plan development. We are steadily developing more employment plans and seeing more customers successfully becoming employed.

Now for the best news! By mid-February 2008, DVR will no longer have a waiting list. This is an important milestone for us. We will again be able to serve customers as they are determined eligible. As you may know, our program is designed for individuals with disability-related barriers to employment. We look forward to being able to assist more eligible individuals to address their barriers, develop their skills and work with them to find employment.

***Now for the best news! By mid-February 2008, DVR will no longer have a waiting list.***

We have been making some fundamental changes at DVR and you will likely notice those changes right away. We start talking about employment from the very beginning. We are building relationships with employers in the public and private sector. Our goal is to create more opportunities for our customers to participate in internships, work experiences and of course, more jobs!

Many of our DVR customers rely on good coordination between DVR and other workforce and human services partners. We are working more closely with Mental Health and Developmental Disability Services. You will find us more actively involved at the local WorkSource Center and the services they offer to job seekers and employers. We have just completed an agreement with all the public institutions of higher education to better coordinate our services and to assure that DVR customers receive the accommodations they need.

We look forward to serving more individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. We have staff and partners throughout the state with the skills and interest in serving you and helping you achieve your vocational goals. DVR services can benefit students who are transitioning from high school or college, veterans who need assistance in returning to work and other adults with disabilities who need our assistance. Please help us outreach to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing who need DVR services.

We look forward to working with you! If you'd like more information about our services or want to contact us, please check out our website: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/dvr](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/dvr).

Cheers!

# Technical Changes Affecting Televisions

## Overview of DTV Transition

The FCC has a digital television (DTV) transition order that will be effective on Tuesday, February 17, 2009. This means that television broadcasting will switch from analog signals to digital signals. On that date, all U.S. TV stations will stop broadcasting in analog format and only transmit in digital format. Consumers who pay for TV services (cable, satellite) will continue to receive broadcast of TV programs because they are already transmitted over-the-air in digital broadcasting format.

Consumers who do not have DTV capabilities will not be able to receive television broadcasting. Those who do not have subscription TV services will have two options to continue receiving free digital television programming:

1. Purchase a digital TV either a stand alone digital TV or separate digital tuner set-top box)
2. Purchase a digital-to-analog converter box for each analog TV. The converter box will convert over-the-air digital signals into a format compatible with analog TVs.

Starting in 2008, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), a program operated by a government agency, will offer \$40 subsidy coupons, up to two per household, to help consumers pay for converter boxes.

Information about the digital-to-analog converter box coupon program is available at:

- <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon/index.html>
- 1-888-DTV-2009 voice
- 1-877-530-2634 TTY

## Closed Captioning and the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box

FCC rules require DTV equipment, such as converter boxes, to be capable of carrying closed captioning information. The digital-to-analog converter box receives closed caption signals, and transmits them to the TV automatically.

## Displaying Closed Captions on TV

Analog TVs that are 13" or larger, and manufactured after July 1993, can display closed captions. To turn closed captions on/off through the digital-to-analog converter box, follow the instructions that came with the TV. If closed captions could be displayed on the TV before using a converter box, closed captions should continue to be displayed on the TV the same way after attaching the converter box.

The process is a bit different with smaller TVs. Analog TVs that are smaller than 13", and TVs manufactured before July 1993, are not required to display closed captions. However, closed captioning may be displayed on these TVs if the converter box is equipped with closed captioning capabilities. When purchasing a converter box, consumers should check to see if they have captioning capabilities. If the converter box is



Consumers who do not have DTV capabilities will not be able to receive television broadcasting.

equipped with this feature, follow instructions in the converter box manual to display closed captioning.

## Problems Viewing Closed Captions

If you are using a digital-to-analog converter box with an analog TV set and cannot see any captions, contact the converter box manufacturer.

If you turn on the digital-to-analog converter box and see a double row of overlapping captions, it may mean you are seeing captions through both your TV and your digital-to-analog converter box. You should turn off the closed captioning function either on your television or on the converter box. If you are unable to solve the problem, contact the converter box manufacturer for more information.

If you are able to get captions on one station, but not another, you should contact the television station whose programming does not have captions. This is likely not a problem with the converter box.

## For More Information about the DTV Transition:

Information is available online at [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov). DTV Transition Fact Sheets are available at:

- <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/digitaltv.html>
- <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/dtvcaptions.html>

Contact the FCC Consumer Center:

- 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice
- 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY
- Fax: 1-866-418-0232
- E-mail: [dtvinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:dtvinfo@fcc.gov)

# DB Communicator: Advanced Communication Technology for People who are Deaf-Blind

By Jim Halliday, HumanWare US

The Washington State Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) needed a modern DeafBlind Communicator but found that the companies did not have the resources to develop one. They found funding themselves and worked with deaf-blind people to create a specification. After an extensive search and bidding process, ODHH selected HumanWare to design and manufacture a brand new Deaf-Blind Communicator (DBC). This article briefly explains the project and provides a status report.

*To define the specification for a DBC that will serve the greatest number of potential users is challenging.*

- Not everyone agrees on what's most important
- Not everyone has the same level of skills
- Not everyone has used technology before
- Not everyone is a strong Braille user
- Not everyone uses a Braille keyboard
- Not everyone wants to use high-end functions
- Everyone wants portability
- Everyone wants a communicator that can handle both face-to-face and TTY applications
- Everyone wants a device that is simple to learn and use, but also one that will grow in functionality as the user grows in experience and need

*ODHH organized special focus groups that involved deaf-blind individuals and specialists. They wanted to keep some of the basic features of the old Tel-eBraille (TB):*

- TTY capabilities
- Answering machine
- Face-to-face communications
- Ease-of-use
- Braille display/keyboard

*ODHH also wanted a new DBC to:*

- be truly portable
- offer a choice of Braille or QWERTY keyboards
- have built-in TTY functionality
- include a built-in answering machine
- include a truly portable satellite unit for face-to-face communications

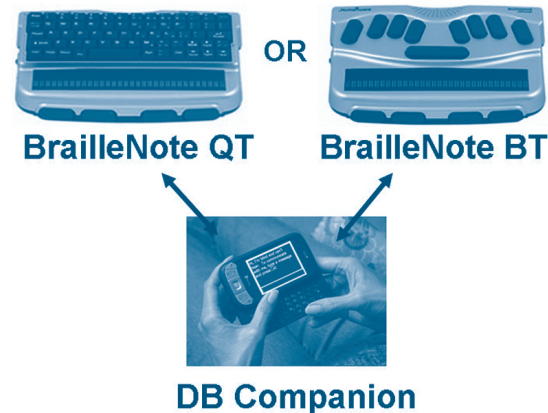
*ODHH wanted the new Deaf-Blind Communicator to be able to tap mainstream communications and functionality. As users grow in experience and knowledge, these more advanced features could be selectively activated:*

- Notetaker (word processor)
- Organizer/Scheduler
- Email program
- Address/Phone list manager
- Internet browser
- Book storage and reading capability

*One of the reasons ODHH selected HumanWare to develop and manufacture a new DBC is because of the BrailleNote. Building the DBC on top of a product that already contains many of the specified capabilities provides a number of key benefits:*

- A tested layout and design
- Models with either Qwerty or Braille keyboards
- A high quality dynamic Braille display
- A mainstream operating system in Windows CE
- A proven user interface known for its ease-of-use
- Thousands of units on the market already being supported and serviced
- Full suite of applications
- Ongoing development that will flow over to the DBC as desired

## DeafBlind Communicator



We expect that one-on-one basic training will be required to ensure that deaf-blind users can effectively use the product. A more advanced curriculum will also be available to those users who are more technically experienced and who want to activate and effectively use some of the higher level applications. HumanWare will provide the basic curriculum for these two levels of training, but ODHH will provide the trainers who use this curriculum to train the deaf-blind users.

**Editor's Note:** Jim Halliday is the Founding CEO of HumanWare US. He is currently Vice President of Advocacy for the HumanWare Group, located in Newberg, OR. He can be contacted via email at [jim.halliday@humanware.com](mailto:jim.halliday@humanware.com) or at 925-408-6459 Voice

<http://www.humanware.com/en-usa/products/deafblind>

*Condensed and adapted by ODHH for publication purposes.*



# SeaTac Airport seeks comments on Removing Communication Barriers

By Steve Peck

**Have you ever wondered how to improve communication options at the airport?**

## Now is your opportunity!

Those interested in increasing options of telecommunication devices for deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and speech disabled people can show support and make a difference.

SeaTac Airport is in the process of researching for vendors that provide various communication products such as pay phones, videophones, captioned telephones, telebraille, and other enhanced devices to install at the airport. The equipment will be set-up to improve communication access for the community. SeaTac Airport is interested in feedback from deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and speech disabled people.

## Contact SeaTac Airport

You have two options for giving comments and suggestions:

- Call the SeaTac Customer Comment line through the relay. Callers should be prepared to leave a message with a name and phone number (optional) and brief comments.

**(206) 431- 4931 Voice**  
**(800) 508-1705 Voice**

- Submit comments online or by e-mail. Visit the Port of Seattle online, select "Contact Us" to give feedback.

**E-Mail: [aviation-internet@portseattle.org](mailto:aviation-internet@portseattle.org)**  
**Online : [www.portseattle.org](http://www.portseattle.org)**

*All comments will be forwarded to the SeaTac Airport Management Team.*



## ODHH Earns Award *Continued from page 3*

The nomination for the ODHH as Outstanding Employer of the Year cites "Kelly is an excellent example of what natural support looks like in a work place and where other co-workers have followed her actions."

## Like a Family

Lucas, who as a teen-ager was introverted and very apprehensive to talk in group settings, earned the Distinguished Toastmaster Award from Toastmasters, Inc., an organization that recognizes and promotes public speaking. He also volunteers with the Olympia Police Department and recently enrolled at South Puget Sound Community College with the goal of attaining an AA degree.

The office of ODHH are like a family and are so welcoming and supportive of not only Lucas, but of everyone that visits," said Laurie Schindler, Morningside job coach. "Lucas is very helpful and so aware of other people's needs. He has grown so much as a person at the office of ODHH. He reminds me of the Energizer® bunny, because he has so much energy."

*"Working with Lucas is a pleasure! We've been involved with the Supported Employment Program through Morningside since 2000 which has been a very positive experience."*

Eric Raff; Director for the ODHH says "Working with Lucas is a pleasure! We've been involved with the Supported Employment Program through Morningside since 2000 which has been a very positive experience. It takes a collaborative partnership and team effort to support Lucas' skills and abilities for continued success on the job." He added, "We are honored to receive this award and I see it as recognition of the efforts put forth by the entire ODHH staff."

## Chamber of Commerce Recognition

A formal awards ceremony will be held at the Olympia Chamber of Commerce in March where the ODHH will "officially" be given the honor. Eric and his staff at the ODHH were presented the Outstanding Employer plaque in more casual surroundings at their DSHS Olympia office in December - with the understanding that they will be again be presented with the plaque at the March event.

Looks like staff at ODHH will have to get their smiles ready for the cameras again. With the friendliness, warmth and supportive atmosphere of everyone at the ODHH the smiles should be no problem.

## Do you need ODHH publications in other reading formats or in a foreign language?

Information, Referral and Advocacy Updates  
By Ryan Bondroff

ODHH can provide ODHH-related program information in Large Print, Braille format or in a foreign language.

### Large Print and Braille Format:

We have new large print brochures about ODHH's programs and the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution program. For people who request Braille materials, we can provide those brochures and other ODHH related materials as well.

### Foreign Language Format:

If you prefer to read ODHH materials in a foreign language such as Spanish, Russian, Chinese, French, etc. We can have ODHH materials translated in any language that meet your language needs.

Please contact Ryan Bondroff to request materials in your preferred foreign language or reading format (large print or Braille) via email at: [bondroffryan@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:bondroffryan@dshs.wa.gov) or call 1-(800) 422-7930. You can also use Videophone (VP) to contact ODHH. We will complete your request and mail the materials to you.

## Back Issues of ODHH Community Review

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has back issues available for anyone who is interested in receiving them. Please contact ODHH at (800) 422-7930 V/TTY or email [ODHH@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:ODHH@dshs.wa.gov) to let us know which newsletter and how many copies you need. We'll be happy to send you those newsletters.



### List of Back Issues:

1. Spring 2004, Volume 1, Number 1
2. Fall 2004, Volume 1, Number 2
3. Winter 2005, Volume 2, Number 1
4. Summer 2005, Volume 2, Number 2
5. Fall 2005, Volume 2, Number 3 – Regular and Large Print available
6. Winter 2006, Volume 3, Number 1
7. Summer 2006, Volume 3, Number 2
8. Fall 2006, Volume 3, Number 3
9. Winter 2007, Volume 4, Number 1
10. Spring 2007, Volume 4, Number 2
11. Summer 2007, Volume 4, Number 3
12. Fall 2007, Volume 4, Number 4

## Current Smoke Alarms Unable to Wake Millions of Hard of Hearing People

According to the July 2007 study, "Waking Effectiveness of Alarms for Adults who are Hard-of-Hearing," the audible signal used by smoke alarms failed to wake up 43 percent of tested subjects with mild to moderately severe hearing loss despite the fact that all were able to hear the 3100 Hz tone when awake. Strobe lights woke up only 27 percent of the hard-of-hearing subjects. A specific audible multiple frequency signal consisting of a 520 Hz square wave successfully woke 92 percent of the subjects at 75 dBA and woke 100 percent at 95 dBA.

The study was written by Dorothy Bruck and Ian Thomas of Victoria University, Australia, estimated at least 34.5 million people in the USA have partial hearing loss and projected that this number would increase over the years.

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) has long suspected that people have died in fires because they could not hear or wake up to high-frequency smoke alarms. The government investigations of fire fatalities have not inquired into whether the victims had hearing loss. The audible smoke alarms and strobe lights were not specifically tested with hard of hearing people during stages of deep sleep. The findings of this study show that millions of people with hearing loss will not be awakened from deep sleep by audible alerts which use only one tone in the high frequencies rather than a range of frequencies beginning at approximately 500 Hz.

The study evaluated the performance of six different signals for waking up hard-of-hearing people from deep sleep and found the 520 Hz square wave to be the most effective of all the signals. Vibrator shakers woke 80 percent of the subjects very quickly, but did not wake up 100 percent of the subjects even at higher levels of intensity.

For people with more severe hearing loss, the authors recommended studying the effectiveness of two or more different signals, such as a 520 Hz square wave audible signal with a tactile alert and/or a strobe light.

There are no emergency alerting products on the market incorporating a range of tones and also including a low frequency near 500 Hz. "Other research has already shown that the

*Continued on next page*

# WASHINGTON School for the Deaf

## Superintendent Search

### Meet the Candidates

Help the Governor and The Board of Trustees select the new superintendent for the Washington School for the Deaf. Attend one of the stakeholder forums where candidates will present their vision for deaf education in Washington State, and discuss the skills and experience that they each bring to the position. Audience members will have the opportunity to see each candidate, ask them questions, and provide feedback to the Board before it recommends up to three candidates to the Governor for final selection.

Facilitators will be available at each location to greet participants and collect feedback forms. ASL interpretive services will be provided at all locations. Those needing additional accommodations should contact Judy Smith (360-696-6525 ext. 0401) or [judy.smith@wsd.wa.gov](mailto:judy.smith@wsd.wa.gov) by February 19, 2008.

#### Wednesday, March 12, 2008

**Event Location:** Puget Sound ESD  
800 Oakesdale Ave SW  
Renton, WA 98057-5221

**Time:** 7:00pm – 9:30pm

#### Thursday, March 13, 2008

**Location:** Washington School for the Deaf  
611 Grand Blvd  
Vancouver, WA 98661

**Time:** 7:00pm – 9:30pm

#### **Remote Locations:** (Wednesday only)

Those living outside of the Seattle area are invited to participate via two-way video conference at any of the following remote meeting locations:

**Spokane**  
ESD 101  
4202 S. Regal  
Spokane, 99223-7764

**Wenatchee**  
ESD 171  
430 Old Station Road  
Wenatchee, 98801

**Silverdale**  
Central Kitsap High School  
3700 NW Anderson Hill Rd  
Silverdale, WA 98383-0008

**Olympia**  
ESD 113  
601 McPhee Rd. S.W.  
Olympia, 98502-5080

**Yakima**  
ESD 105  
33 S. 2nd Ave.  
Yakima, 98902-3486

**Pasco**  
ESD 123  
3918 W. Court St.  
Pasco, 99301

**Bellingham**  
Bellingham School Dist. Office  
1306 Dupont St  
Bellingham, WA 98225

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520 Hz square wave is the best for waking up other vulnerable populations, such as elderly people and people under the influence of alcohol. All manufacturers of emergency warning devices (smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and weather radios), should explore methods of providing variations of the 520 Hz square wave as an audible alert so that people with all types

of hearing loss can be awoken quickly from deep sleep. Manufacturers also need to specify the frequency response of their audible alerts so that customers of all kinds can make informed decisions about their purchases.

Hearing Loss Association of America thanks the Fire Protection Research Foundation for commissioning this research

study, and Drs. Bruck and Thomas for their intensive work on this study. The study is available online at:

<http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/PDF/Research/hardofhearing&alarms.pdf>

Source: <http://www.hearingloss.org/advocacy/press-release080207.asp>

Condensed and adapted by ODHH for publication purposes.



# Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

**Toll Free: 1 (800) 422-7930 V/TTY  
(360) 902-8000 V/TTY**

**Web site: <http://odhh.dshs.wa.gov>**

**Contact ODHH by Video Phone (VP) at:**

**VP IP Address: 209.181.93.249**

**VP#: (360) 902-8000**

Eric Raff, Director .....rafferic@dshs.wa.gov  
Robert Lichtenberg, Assistant Director ..... lichtrw@dshs.wa.gov  
Ryan Bondroff, IRA Program Manager ..... bondroffryan@dshs.wa.gov  
Emily Hill, SLIM Program Manager ..... hillemily@dshs.wa.gov  
Steve Peck, TRS Program Manager ..... pecksc@dshs.wa.gov  
Kelly Robison, TED Program Manager ..... robiskd@dshs.wa.gov  
Colleen Rozmaryn, ACT Program Manager ..... rozmaic@dshs.wa.gov  
Claudia Foy, SHS Program Manager ..... foyclam@dshs.wa.gov

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
PO Box 45301  
Olympia WA 98504-5301

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